

Title: **The Stories We Tell: Breaking Out (Part 2)**  
Text: **Acts 9:1-20**  
Date: **July 21, 2024**

Find the sermon manuscript to follow along with online at [mercyhillchurch.org](https://mercyhillchurch.org).



## Big Idea

On the road to Damascus, Jesus doesn't just break into Paul's life. He also begins to break out from it. From this time forth, Paul starts to tell a different story, a better story—the story of Jesus and the gospel. And the whole of his ministry and theology is, in some ways, going to be shaped by this conversion experience. He writes every letter, we could say, “under the influence” of Damascus. He takes of what Jesus did with him there and then and applies it to us here and now.

### Branch #4: Ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church)

I think it's quite possible that as Paul reflected on these words of Jesus here in Acts 9:4-5, as he considered what it means that persecuting the church is persecuting Jesus—somewhere in the mix of these reflections he began to develop that wonderful metaphor for the church that he later gives to us most strikingly in 1 Cor. 12. There he talks about the church as the *body of Christ*. Because, through the Spirit, we all are united to Jesus in some deep and fundamental way, we are all considered a part of Christ's body—such that, if you strike us, you strike him. When people see us, they see him (at least they should). He's in heaven, and yet he's right here. We are together identified with him. As Paul writes in 1 Cor. 12:27: “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

And this has massive implications, not just for our relationship with Jesus, but also and especially for our relationships with one another as the church. Because what this means is that, when we are saved, when we come into relationship with Jesus, we also—whether we like it or not—come into relationship with other Christians as well. We don't just come to Christ, we come into a community. We become a member of a larger body, his body . . . the church.

### Branch #5: Missiology (the doctrine of missions)

### Component #1: The Heart behind It

By this, I'm simply referring to the humbled heart of submission. So long as you're on your own mission you can never really be on God's. Utility requires humility. You can't be used by God until you're humbled before him.

### Component #2: The Goal for It

In Paul's commission, we also see what's really the end goal for all of missions. And we might put it this way: the end goal for all of missions is to go with the gospel to all the nations.

### Component #3: The Means of Accomplishing It

Now, of course we know one of the means of accomplishing this mission is to preach the gospel, to share the good news, to tell people about Jesus. But there is something else that's highlighted in what Jesus says about Paul here in Acts 9. And it's this idea of suffering in love for the people we're sharing with.

### Branch #6: Eschatology (the doctrine of the end)

Just as Jesus had three days in the grave, we too will suffer for a bit this side of heaven. But just as Jesus rose up from that grave never to die again, vindicated, glorified, now seated at the right hand of his Father, so too we, on the last day, shall be raised immortal, incorruptible, conformed in some way to his body of glory. And all the suffering, the taking up of our own cross in love for God and others, it shall be shown to have been such a small price to pay for such a magnificent salvation and eternal reward!



## Reflection Questions

- Which of the three “branches” we considered today seemed most significant to you personally and why?
- Paul's own story of conversion seems to have radically influenced his understanding of God—his “theology.” Thinking back to your own conversion, are there truths God revealed to you through that experience that have stuck with you through the years and still influence your understanding of God to this day?

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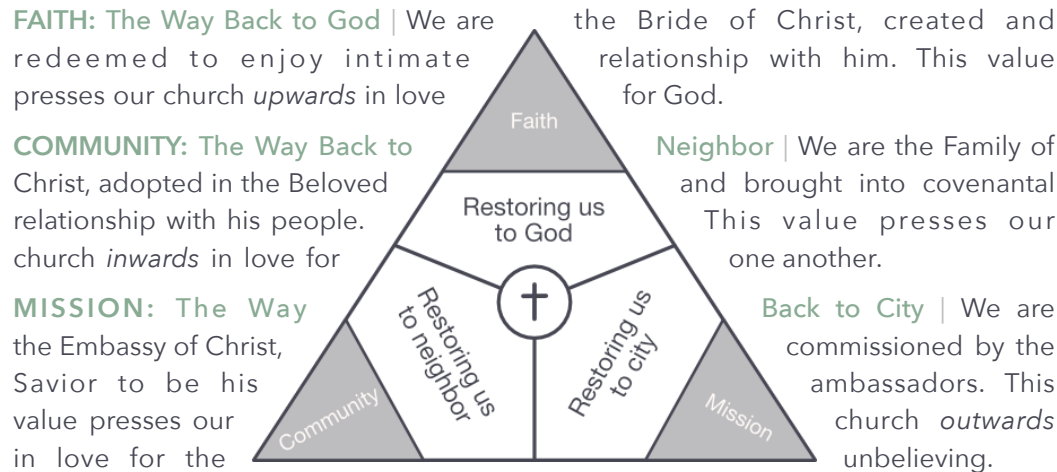


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## Our Mission & Values

*Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.*



## Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.  
We are so glad you've joined us today!

## Announcement Spotlight

### All Church Campout - Register THIS WEEK!

We are excited to announce that we'll be hosting an All Church Campout at Mount Madonna County Park over the weekend of August 2nd-4th! We have a huge group campsite all to ourselves and lots of options in the park for having fun together. Whether you love to camp or you'd rather still sleep in your own bed, we have something for everyone. Because the park is only a 45 minute drive from south San Jose, people can feel free to come and go as it works with their schedule and preference.

**Option #1: Day-Use:** For those not wanting to camp but still wanting to participate, the Day-Use option is best. You can come in for the day, enjoy activities, meals, etc., and then head home to your warm bed while the rest of us "rough" it : ).

**Option #2: Camp:** This option is for those who want the full camping experience. We have the site for Friday and Saturday nights. You can choose to camp for one or both of these depending upon your availability and desire.

Scan the QR code below for more info and to find a link to sign up.  
Please do so by no later than next Sunday 7/28!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at  
[info@mercyhillchurch.org](mailto:info@mercyhillchurch.org).

Support the Nicaragua Short-Term Missions Team!

CityTeam's Grace Village Apartment Renovation!

All Church Prayer - Tonight!

Scan the QR code below for more info!

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